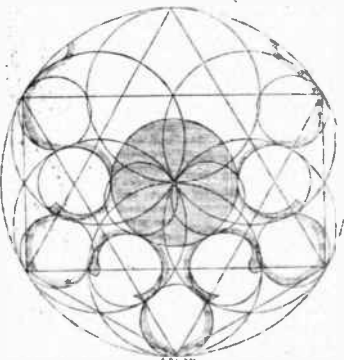


Literature.

Illustrations of Stone Church, Kent. With an Historical Account by Edward Cary, Architect, F.R.A. Published for the Topographical Society, by H. Hooper, Pall-mall East, 1840; fol. 16 pp., 17 plates, 13 wood-engravings.

This work, elucidated by copies of beautiful drawings, the work of Mr. Cary, the accomplished Professor of Painted Architecture to the College of the "Freemasons of the Church," and other members of the Topographical Society, we most particularly recommend to the student, the educated architect, and the antiquary, on account of its exact

graphic merits, the beauty and elegance of the subjects which form the prototypes of its illustrations, and beyond even those high merits, for the clear and admirable historical and descriptive matter which it contains. The work, though small or thin, is all pith, and gladly should we, if decently we might, quote every word of its text; from it we indeed draw copiously, knowing its sterling merit, and that it is one of those compressed works out of which not only the juvenile learner, but the hoary practitioner, may acquire largely due information relative to his craft. It is in verity a true meane work of the highest class, as may be seen by the columnar diagram here given, which we have had engraved after the one inserted in the work itself.



"Stoos is a small village on the high road from London to Dover, seventeen miles from the metropolis, bounded on the north by the river Thames;—it is in the hundred of Axtane and diocese of Rochester.

"Stone Church is dedicated to St. Mary, and anciently paid ninepence Chrim rent to the mother church of the diocese; and in the 15th of King Edward the First, was valued at thirty marks, and the vicarage at seven marks.

"It is not improbable that, during the life of the first rector, all the works in this church which bear the marks of the 13th century were executed, and that the precious church mentioned in the Domesday survey, resembled others erected by the Saxons. These Saxon churches differed little from those of Normandy, and some time after the Conquest, religious edifices were constructed in a similar manner to those erected previous to the invasion by the Normans.

"At Mapplecumbe are the ruins of one of these early churches, having its east end terminated semicircularly. Its total internal length is 63 feet, and breadth 22 feet, the walls being three feet thick. At South Darent, now a hamlet, though formerly a parish, paying ninepence Chrim rent, are the walls of a similar church, now converted into a malt-house; a few years ago, another, with a singular tower, partly constructed with Roman bricks, remained in a field at St. Margaret's at Mills, but of which the plough has now destroyed every vestige.

"In the reign of Richard the First, or about the latter end of the 12th century, the parish churches throughout the kingdom underwent a general reconstruction. A new style was introduced, and a decoration, not before indulged in, everywhere displayed itself. It being adopted simultaneously throughout Christian Europe has occasioned its introduction to be attributed to the Crusaders, who possessed Palestine from the years 1095 to 1291. Among those enthusiastic warriors, the most distinguished for science were the Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem, and possessing 19,000 manors in Europe, could easily have carried any improvement wherever their influence extended. They were established about 1101, and held considerable lands in the adjoining parishes to Stone. On an estate given to them by Robert Basingo about 1116, at Sutton-at-

Home, was one of their commanderies established, which formed their principal resting-place when they visited their possessions in this part of the county, situated in the middle of the beautiful valley of Holmstead, and watered by the clear and pellucid Darent; surrounded by meadows and rich lands, few situations could vie with it either for fertility or beauty. That this establishment was upon an extensive scale may be inferred from walls built of flint, six feet in thickness, extending as far as South Darent, being discovered by the writer when superintending the construction of the present iron bridge. Similar walls have also been traced along the banks of the river in many places.

"In the 12th century the knowledge of geometry was revived by the monk Adelard or Adhelard, who, after travelling through Spain and Egypt, translated, about 1130, the books of Euclid from the Arabic into Latin. This science was ardently taken up by the learned men who immediately followed, particularly by Grossete, Bishop of Lincoln, and others employed on the great buildings in England as well as on those of the Continent.

"The abbey church of St. Denis near Paris, commenced by Eudes Clement in 1229, and finished by Matthieu de Vendome about 1261, the fine chapel at Vincennes, and the Sainte Chapelle at Paris, built from the designs of Pierre de Montreuil, who died in 1266, are early examples of the change that architecture underwent after the revival of the study of geometry; and Eudes de Monreuil, who accompanied St. Louis to the Holy Land, left many similar works.

"Salisbury, Lincoln, Westminster, Winchester, and other buildings of this time, no longer exhibited the round arch or features borrowed by the Normans from Roman constructions, but a new style altogether, having principles essentially geometrical; and it is in vain that we attempt to imitate the tracery or mouldings belonging to this style correctly, unless we consider them to emanate from some simple figure. However numerous the mouldings, they never appear confused, which entirely arises from the order observed in their arrangement; this may be better expressed by the subjoined diagram, taken from the mouldings which form the trefoil arches round the chancel of Stone Church. The points of intersection of the two equilateral triangles are

the centres for the hollows, and the more prominent parts of the moulding are set out with the same radius at the points of the triangles; or, in other words, four circles are encircled within a circle, and by omitting each alternate one the figure is formed. From the equilateral triangle are readily produced the hexagon and dodecagon; and the rose windows of the churches and cathedrals of France, many nearly fifty feet in diameter, and exhibiting a great variety of figures in their designs, are among the most beautiful examples which can be cited of the early and later application of the equilateral triangle to the figures of architecture. From the trefoil, sexfoil, and their multiples, as shown at St. Denis, proceeded the flowing tracery, simply produced by omission of portions of the regular geometrical figure, that which remained being so combined that the manner of its setting out was concealed, probably for the purpose of exciting wonder in the spectator, and thereby adding to that air of mystery which the craft delighted to spread around them. The system depending on the equilateral triangle for its variety of form continued in use till the beginning of the 15th century in France, when it underwent a great and important change by the introduction of the isosceles triangle, and its compound the pentagon. A pupil of Alexander de Berners, architect to the church of St. Ouen at Rouen, proved that these figures could furnish novelties in design, and that all beauty was not confined to the long used favourite triangle. We can well imagine how displeasing this innovation must have been to the whole fraternity of masons; their mystery was invaded, and their very prejudices would lead them to doubt the practicability of any new thing. The result seems to have been fatal to the ingenious artificer. Dom. Desormery, in his History of the Abbey of St. Ouen, mentions that the master was so incensed at the clergy preferring the northern rose window of the transept executed by his pupil, where this innovation was first introduced, to that of the south, of his own execution, upon the ancient triangular system, that, in a fit of jealousy, he killed his rival, and was himself condemned to be hanged.

"To the common observer this theory may appear fanciful, but the writer does not hesitate to assert that the bulkiest mouldings, and the most delicate tracery, where gently flowing lines seem the result of a sportive fancy only, equally emanate from the same sources, and that it is to the neglect of the application of the rules of geometry that we may attribute the defects and failures wherever an imitation of this early style has been attempted in the present day, which neglect has been greatly fostered by the too prevailing opinion that all the beauty we admire is produced by art alone unaided by the science of geometry, the time devoted to line and rule being considered lost. The beautiful tracery, called by some, *par excellence*, the decorated English, cannot accurately be displayed without a knowledge of these principles. Many examples have been tested to prove this fact. On some future occasion the subject may form the subject of a more compendious essay. "On the first principles of Gothic architecture," if not taken up by more able hands.

"This church at different periods has undergone various alterations; but the plan remains as the result of one design. The foundation walls of the tower are the most ancient; they are arched on the north and south sides, as well as towards the nave, forming a vestibule to the church, an arrangement not commonly found, but in this instance adding much to the beauty of the interior. The upper part of the tower is more modern, and once was surmounted by a lofty spire; the flying buttresses contrived to steady the work, have their mouldings in a style as late as the time of Edward the Third, and may be attributed to Johannes Lumbarde.

"The windows which light the side aisles of the nave are not all placed in the middle or opposite the main arches, and those which terminate the east ends of the two aisles are walled up. The outer walls of the church are two feet four inches in thickness; the buttresses attached to them are not of a strength to resist the thrust of a vaulted roof. Those of the chancel are of much greater solidity, and are calculated to bear up against a groined vault, which, without doubt, it once had, and which